Surára
Pakidái

/72 cont./

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[191]

333. (cont.)
p. 70). Among the Piaroa Indians very weak old people are walled up alive in a cave. They are given food and drink for several more days and, when this has been used up, die of enervation (Marquis de Wavrin, 1944, pp. 197/98).

members destined for death are thus dispatched into the other world in an altogether humane manner, and even the killing itself is dictated by humane impulses. Since these old and sick persons can, of course, no longer take part in the customary seminomadic way of life, they would be obliged to remain helplessly behind when the tribe sets out on a new migration. This is to be prevented, however, /73/ and at the same time it is desired that the way to the moon, the paradise of the dead, be opened for them. After their death, they are cremated in the same way as all other deceased persons, that is to say, in the case of old people only the head is burned, and their ashes, too, are preserved and drunk at the festival in memory of the dead.

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775 Greater than the fear of death among all Surára and Pakidái is the thought that they might one day die without being cremated, for example, during military actions, for then the entrance into the moon is barred for their soul (see p. 198).

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[684] Persons who commit incest are excluded from cremation after their demise, and they are not mourned, for incest is regarded as the greatest crime. Poré (see p. 197) does not want
[784] their souls on the moon, and partaking of their bone ashes would exert unfavorable influences on the male members of the tribe. They are therefore tied up in a squatting position and buried in a hole in the ground.

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774 If children die before the completion of the third year of life, they are thrown into the river without any ceremony, since they belong to the flesh and blood of the mother and do not yet have their own soul (see p. 138).

Surára Pakidái

/113 cont./

539 chief delight was to kill small birds with his little bow and arrow. But one night, for fun, /114/ he aimed at the moon and shot off his arrow. At once an eclipse of the moon set in. Blood dripped down and poured like a flood over the entire earth (554). From this blood came all the Yanonámi, that is,

[784] [821]

554. For this reason the Surára and Pakidái children are strictly forbidden to this day to shoot their arrows in the direction of the moon.

the Surára, Pakidái, Puseheweteri, Aramamesteri, Xiriána, Karauateri, Waiká, etc. (see p. 12).

The Origin of Fire

539 392 The virgin forest with its wealth of plants and fruits was already created, and human beings, as well as all kinds of animals were living upon the earth. Only fire was still lacking. Besides their vegetable food, the human inhabitants were therefore able to eat only raw meat, and at night they shivered in their hammocks. They knew, however, that the cayman (jacaretinga) had fire in its mouth. Despite all entreaties, it would not give up any of it. So people resorted to a ruse. They asked the hummingbird to fly around the cayman and make jokes. At first the cayman was unmoved and took no notice of the little bird. But finally he could not suppress his laughter any longer, whereupon fire shot out of his opened mouth. The people were very happy about it and thanked the hummingbird extravagantly.

/206 cont./

223 order to pick it up. As a result of his expertness in hunting, he knows the trees in which the birds gather to spend the night. The man, using palm leaves and bejucos, carefully prepares a blind with the sure hope that, by means of this ambush, the booty will be plentiful.

224 Hunting in groups is common among the Sanemá, and they
262 do this particularly to surround a group of monkeys, peccaries,
[237] or in order to kill a feline. /207/ They do not eat the meat of jaguars, but keep the canine teeth in the roof of the house.
[482] They tie up the peccaries that they get, front feet to the back ones, load them on their backs, and carry them home. The meat of the peccary is greatly esteemed, and the whole rancheria gathers to eat the animal, with the exception of the young unmarried men, who, by order of the capitan, must not taste the meat so that the hunters who have killed the animals will not die. They may, however, eat other kinds of meat and the food which they most like.

There are some animals that the Sanemá are prohibited from hunting: thus, they do not eat snakes, they kill the cayman, but
[766] do not sample its flesh. The Sanemá of the Erebato told us that they cremate caymans as they do men, for, in fact, as far as
[784] they are concerned, caymans were previously men. It is taboo to kill a morrocoy or a turtle. They were people before and Omao
262 does not permit them to be killed. There are other animals which
223 they kill and eat only under certain conditions, among them the eagle (21).

> 21. The Surará and Pakidai kill the eagle, but throw away its flesh. They say that it transmits sickness (Becher, 1960, p. 77). (Cf. the section on "death" in the present study /see pp. 93-94 /.)

223 If a hunter comes upon an eagle, he believes that he is facing
225 a speciman of a species of animal which was previously a person.
262 He may be facing a friend or an enemy. Therefore, before shooting, he asks the animal if it is a friend or an enemy, and only if

/220 cont./

159 inside, it is tied with lianas. Then they take the corpse into
764 the forest where it is deposited, at a distance of some kilometers, on the branches of a tree in order for the flesh to decompose there. Often the members of the family will not leave the corpse alone in the forest for fear that animals will come and
[775] devour it. The dead are very much afraid of animals and shout when a jaguar approaches them.

[325] The feline respects only a dead sablf, because he will die
[756] in turn if he approaches.

Our informant spent several nights next to his father's
[784] corpse, always being very careful not to step on the damp ground beneath the dead man, because those who step there lose their feet.

152 The grief of the relatives is so intense that very often some
764 of them can not endure the pain and go to the forest to die. Above all the women lament a great deal during the night and the men hold them back so that they will not run away to the forest. The informant remembered that the strongest man of his tribe behaved as though he were mad after the death of his father and wanted to kill everybody. The men did not allow him to go with them into the forest to gather up the bones of his father for fear that, given his behavior, he might commit some crime.

765 After one month, more or less, the men of the tribe go to the forest and gather up the bones of their companion; the flesh decomposes completely during this period. Some of the men let down the coffin and others wrap the remains of the deceased in some large leaves, making in this way a bundle of bones which they take back with them to the rancheria. There they place it in a hammock and leave it for about four days, while the relatives continue to weep in uninterrupted lamentation.

765 Later the sablf carries the bones to a fire prepared in the
775 plaza and places them on top of the pile of firewood. Our
[756] informant also said that as the sablf did this he pronounced a well-known formula which means: "you are getting along well," for, if he did not say this, the hfkula would not be able to find its way. Afterwards he lights the fire, blows upon it at the same time as he raises his arms /221/ above his head, and in the smoke

/222 cont./

793 the men learn because of the frequency with which he sings them.
773 He sings during the day, but especially at night. Suddenly he
[776] interrupts his song and flies up into the sky, where he joins other hɛwĩawán in order to sup with Omao.

The hɛwĩawán must jealously keep a certain number of
793 taboos, and on the degree of care with which he keeps them
● 784 depends, not only his power as a priest, but also the existence of
[262] all his people. Thus, for example, he must not eat crabs or other animals which in reality are men to them, just like eagles, etc.

[778] Should he do this, the "weight of the dead" kills his hikuladɛ, a disaster which, in turn, causes the death, not only
[726] of the priest, but also of a large part of his congregation. For the same reason, the hɛwĩawán never takes part in war or in any combat whatsoever, because, although he is invulnerable and no arrow or club can kill him, his hikuladɛ could not bear the "weight" of a man killed by his weapons. This is the reason why each Sanemá local group relies on a special chief for wartime.

793 The hɛwĩawán, who belongs to the court of Omao more than
[776] to the Sanemá community, does not marry a specific woman.
[836] He may have sexual relations with all the unmarried women of the group, but he is completely unconcerned about them and the children. He has no duties as either husband or father.

/223/ If a hɛwĩawán dies, any woman of the group may
[776] have a son predestined to be a hɛwĩawán. No one knows which
[781] of the boys born in the period immediately after the death of a priest may be the hɛwĩawán of the future, but one day the true hɛwĩawán will return from the forest where he has met the Great Jaguar, who changed him into a priest, replacing his human flesh with other flesh more worthy of his bones, the flesh of a bat-priest.

[771] He than informs the people of what has happened, and, as that election happens shortly after the death of a priest, the new hɛwĩawán tries to take the vacant place in time, assuring, in this manner, the continuation of uninterrupted contact which the Sanemá have had with Omao generation after generation.

/236 cont./
539 places (26).

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26. Taking into account what has already been pointed out as a prayer directed to Omao in order that he allow to come out those animals which he would judge as surplus in the animal kingdom, the young man's behavior can be judged as an offense against God because he would not yield to his will.

The father of the young hunter was at home sitting in front of the fire. He was a sablf. Suddenly he saw a swarm of butterflies approaching to put out the fire. A great cloud of smoke arose. The sablf heard the prolonged and penetrating howls of the Great Fox who has various members of his family living in the river. When they come out of the waters, they do not only kill the hunter who made them leave their "house," but all of his family as well. The butterflies also live in the river and are the friends of the Great Fox, whom they help to kill bad and guilty hunters. After putting out the fire they attack the family of the bad hunter, and, if the latter happens to be at home, they suck out his blood from the corners of his eyes. The sablf knew all about this and the grave danger which his son and his whole family were in, but he also knew a means of defending them against the butterflies. He caught some of them and spat on them. The butterflies immediately ceased their attack on him and died. The Great Fox kept quiet because he knew that his victim was in the forest under the protection of a powerful shaman. In this way the young hunter was saved from the teeth of the Great Fox,[1] who devours his victims and swallows them without chewing.

KASMAI

Kasmái is a man who lives in the river. Every six months, when there is a new moon, he comes out of the water to live for three days among men. This pleases them, and they regale him with a dance celebration. Kasmái enjoys himself very much at these celebrations. He comes up out of the river with his body

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

a torrid sun or the cold dankness of the forest after dark, the Indians are especially subject to respiratory troubles, bronchitis and chronic catarrh being common. It must be a short step from these to tuberculosis, to judge by the widespread incidence of the latter, though it is worth recording that among the Samatari themselves the disease does not appear to have reached the same alarming proportions as among the Taurepàn of the Eastern uplands, where it [192] is a real scourge. Their name for it is an onomatopoeic one—*toctocmòh*—suggesting the coughing and catarrhal effects of any malady of the respiratory system, to which the word is applied.

[784] They are more afraid of tuberculosis than of any war, or any surprise [721] attack at night. Tribes infected with *toctocmòh* become taboo, and by the same token immune from attack, because their enemies are more afraid of their tuberculosis than their arrows. I was told this by Uarema, who said that some time ago a party of their enemies (of unspecified origin) set out to attack them. They had already been several days on the march when they learned that the Guayca were suffering from a bad epidemic of colds and catarrh. They gave up their idea of attacking them, and returned to their own lands.

752 Wounds infected by insects can be quickly cured, the reason being that with 164 these primitive Indians the defence-mechanism is vigorous and reacts immediately when assisted by antibiotics or sulphonamides. In this connection I have often determined by experiment the relative healthiness of the forest compared with the unhealthiness of the grasslands or savannah lying open to the sun. In the forest, damp and mouldering like some subterranean world, wounds rarely become infected, even if they are not kept clean.

* 123 I once fell down on a clay hillside, in the Upper Cuyumi country, with a 164 machete in my hand. It was pouring with rain and everything was covered with 752 mud and very slippery. The machete stuck into the ground as I fell forward, and my hand—as happens in the case of a fall like this—automatically tightened on the tool to help me regain my balance and slid along the blade, which was always kept razor-sharp. I had three fingers cut open right through the middle joint, the muscles and tendons being severed. We had nothing with us, not even a clean handkerchief. I at once closed my hand and bound up the fist with a bit of old rag. We then spent some days making our way down to the base-camp where we had our medicines and disinfectants. There I opened my fist, to find the cuts miraculously closed up, without the slightest sign of any infection. A

/481 cont./

832 They believe that another substance is effective against women, especially if it is thrown at them. They use it to frighten them, and it also forms a part of the ceremony in which a man shows his preference for a woman whom he wishes to make his wife.

784 753 There is a taboo with respect to the burning of cloth or paper. The burning of cloth or paper, according to what they believe, causes sickness and /482/ perhaps death. The Guaika do not dare to do it "against an enemy," since they are afraid that they might die also.

753 795 Men cannot see a "bole" -- the spirit or soul of a dead person which has returned -- but women can see them on occasion, and, when they do, it is almost certain that the "bole" will make them sick. The "bole" has two eyes like embers, a cold skin, and in general has human forms. It customarily passes by way of the paths, especially at night, and frequently returns to abandoned settlements. They can talk and shout like a man; and many strange noises which are heard in the woods are attributed to the neamess of a "bole." The fall of a tree by itself is also attributed to a "bole."

[781] Once a woman told us about her encounter with a "bole." She had been awakened by something which touched her and hit her in the ribs. When she woke up, a voice said to her: "There are enemies outside." She became very frightened and did not go back to sleep for the rest of the night.

The mere presence of a "bole" is considered sufficient to cause an acute pain in some part of the body.

Frequently we were asked by the Indians if there were "boles" the night before in the surroundings.

It is believed that the "boles" travel alone in open country. Thus, they assume that a few palm leaves obstructing the entrance to the path are usually sufficient to block their way. It is also believed that fire is an effective weapon against the "boles," whereas an arrow would be useless.

751 There is a belief that a certain seed is efficacious for keeping danger away from the children. They string these seeds as if they were beads and hang them around the child's neck.

segments or fibres from the seje palm leaf are worn through the ear lobes. Small sticks are inserted in the lip and nasal peforations, but, as the women get older, these are discarded. Older women wear only single strings around the wrists, ankles, knees, and upper torso, or, like the children, nothing at all.

Other than the social feasts held during the dry season, ceremonies are limited to female puberty rites, purification rites for men who have killed other men in raids, a vision-quest rite to induct shamans, and mortuary feasts during which the pulverized bones of the dead are consumed in a soup made from boiled ripe plantains.

The puberty rite for females and the purification rite for killers are almost identical. The initiate is confined to quarters that are covered over with a specific kind of palm leaf, the cotton garments and cotton possessions belonging to the initiate are discarded and replaced with new ones, special sticks are used to scratch the body and to pick up food, and straws are used to drink water. The shedding of blood, of considerable mythological importance to the Yanomamö in validating their ferocity and warfare, is ceremonially expressed in two of five rites.

The induction of shamans involves drug-taking, fasting and meditation. The candidate is forbidden to walk anywhere except on a set number of paths in and around the village, and he is distinguished in the village by a staff to

which is tied a bundle of feathers.[1]

Besides shamans, of which there are several in every village, there are influential 'big men.' The number of big men in a village depends, on the one hand, on the size of the village and the number of local patrilineages comprising it, and, on the other, on the number of men who are personally qualified to lead. The qualities that determine leadership are personal courage, fierceness, the ability to be outraged by even the slightest insult, marksmanship, diplomacy in trading with representatives from other villages, the ability to arrange marriages for male supporters with females from other villages, cunning and intelligence in dealings with allies, the ability to attract young men to live permanently in the village by promising them wives, and the defense of group members who get into difficulties with other village members.

Individuals who possess all these attributes are considered leaders only if they have a large natural following, i.e., brothers and sons living with them in their village. Otherwise, such men have only just a little more

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[1] To give a more comparative statement on the poverty of Yąnomamö culture, they possess only 11 traits of the 354 listed in the 4th edition of Carneiro and Tobias' "Trait List to be Used for the Study of Cultural Evolution by Means of Scale Analysis," (1963, mimeograph). By contrast, the Siriono have 8, the Andamanese 10, the Jivaro 22, the Nuer 28, the Siusi 39, the Iroquois 64, the Bemba 100 and the Tahitians 140. (Carneiro and Tobias, 1963:201.) In the classification developed by E. R. Service (1962), the Yąnomamö are "tribal."

appropriately adjusted, he had no difficulty marrying the remaining two.

The close ties between siblings of the opposite sex and between brothers-in-law are also reflected in the fact that incestuous relationships are not severely punished. Thus, KąobÃwÃ was known to be having an affair with his classificatory sister, KrÃÖmi, but her husband overlooked the matter. Incest is not severely punished. The YąnomamÖ rely on the internal sanctions of shame and conscience, bolstered supernaturally by the fear that incestuous affairs prevent the release of the soul of the guilty party during cremation. As a counter measure, they dismember the body of someone known to have committed incest during his life time, and burn the parts of the body a much longer time than they normally would have otherwise. Some of the YąnomamÖ avoid incestuous affairs, according to KąobawÃ, because one of their ancestors turned into a sloth (ihama) after having committed incest. KąobawÃ himself initially denied having incestuous affairs because incest (yaweremou), as he put it, ". . . is the most despicable thing possible." Later, he confided that he had fornicated with his FaBrDa on a number of occasions and did not seem particularly concerned about the matter, except his fear that I would tell his wife. Other data suggest that incest, far from being feared, is widely practiced. In particular, kinship usage varies considerably from the expected usage predictable from genealogical data and the Iroquois terminology. Whenever I